

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 DRC-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

SAM-01 OMB-01 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00

XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 STR-08 CEA-02

/172 W

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O R 011445Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8341

INFO USINT CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: GENERAL ELECTION: THE MORNING AFTER

SUMMARY: PM'S HEATH'S ELECTION GAMBLE HAS NOT GIVEN  
HIM THE RENEWED MANDATE HE SOUGHT. ALTHOUGH RESULTS  
ARE INCOMPLETE, IT APPEARS THAT THE LABOR PARTY  
WILL HAVE A SLENDER PLURALITY. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR  
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WHO WILL FORM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH ELECTION RESULTS NOW AVAILABLE FROM 560 OF BRITAIN'S 635 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS, IT IS CLEAR THAT NEITHER MAJOR PARTY CAN HOPE TO OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF 318. FURTHER, IT IS STILL NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT WITH CERTAINTY WHICH PARTY WILL HAVE A PLURALITY, THOUGH LABOR IS FAVORED IN COMPUTER PROJECTIONS WHICH SUGGEST A FINAL COUNT OF LABOR 305, CONSERVATIVE 299, LIBERAL 13, OTHERS 18. THESE RESULTS REFLECT A SWING FROM CONSERVATIVE TO LABOR IN COMPARABLE SEATS OF 0.4 PERCENT. BOTH HAVE A CONSIDERABLY REDUCED PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL VOTE AS A RESULT OF A LIBERAL VOTE OF ABOUT 19 PERCENT. HIGH AS THE LIBERAL VOTE IS, IT HAS NOT BEEN HIGH ENOUGH TO REACH THE TAKE-OFF POINT OF ABOUT 25 PERCENT WHICH, UNDER THE BRITISH SYSTEM WOULD HAVE STARTED TO GIVE IT PARLIAMENTARY SEATS IN ROUGH PROPORTION TO ITS PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL VOTE. THE LIBERALS ARE, NEVERTHELESS, IN A KEY POSITION, SINCE THEIR APPROXIMATELY 13 SEATS COULD PROVE DECISIVE.

2. WHATEVER ELSE EMERGES FROM EXAMINATION OF THE RESULTS WHEN THEY ARE ALL IN, THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCLUSION IS THAT PM HEATH'S GENERAL ELECTION GAMBLE FAILED: THE COUNTRY DID NOT GIVE HIM THE RENEWED MANDATE HE SOUGHT.

3. THE PRESSURE OF THE DOMESTIC SITUATION MAKES IT LIKELY THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE FORMED QUICKLY. ACCORDING TO CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERTS, HEATH IS UNDER NO COMPULSION TO RESIGN AS PM UNLESS THE LABOR PARTY ACHIEVES A CLEAR MAJORITY (318) EITHER ON ITS OWN OR IN COMBINATION WITH THE LIBERALS. SINCE THIS APPEARS TO BE RULED OUT (SEE BELOW), HEATH COULD DECIDE TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE, ESPECIALLY IF THE CONSERVATIVES WIN A PLURALITY OF THE POPULAR VOTE. HE MIGHT ASSUME THAT THE LIBERALS WOULD NOT WISH TO TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY--AND OPPROBRIUM--OF PRECIPITATING ANOTHER GENERAL ELECTION. HE MIGHT ALSO ASSUME THAT THE NI LOYALISTS (PROBABLY) WOULD NOT OPPOSE HIM IN COMMONS BECAUSE THEY WOULD FIND THE PROSPECT OF A LABOR GOVERNMENT EVEN LESS ATTRACTIVE THAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A TORY ONE.

4. IT IS MORE PROBABLE, HOWEVER, THAT HEATH WILL HAVE TO YIELD TO HAROLD WILSON THE TASK OF TRYING TO FORM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. WILSON HAS SAID REPEATEDLY AND CATEGORICALLY THAT HE WOULD NOT ENTER INTO COALITION WITH THE LIBERALS. LABOR PARTY SOURCES TELL US THAT HE WOULD GOVERN WITHOUT LIBERAL SUPPORT AND DEFY THE LIBERALS TO

BRING HIM DOWN. GIVEN THE MAGNITUDE OF BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, HE TOO WOULD RECKON THAT THE LIBERALS WOULD BE UNWILLING TO PRECIPITATE ANOTHER GENERAL ELECTION IMMEDIATELY. THIS SCENARIO ASSUMES, HOWEVER, THAT WILSON WOULD NOT PRESS CONTROVERSIAL POLICIES OPPOSED BY THE LIBERALS.

5. MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT IN ANY EVENT THERE WILL HAVE TO BE A SECOND GENERAL ELECTION BEFORE THE YEAR IS OUT. WHATEVER GOVERNMENT IS FORMED WILL HAVE TO SETTLE THE MINERS' DISPUTE URGENTLY AND TAKE STRONG EMERGENCY MEASURES TO COPE WITH INFLATION AND THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEM. AFTER THAT, IT WILL PROBABLY WISH TO SEEK ANOTHER MANDATE.

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( ISO ) W

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6. WE DO NOT SHARE THE DEPARTMENT'S PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT (STATE 41025 NOTAL) THAT THE OUTCOME OF YESTERDAY'S ELECTION "ALL BUT GUARANTEES THAT UK WILL END UP CONTINUING IN EC." THIS IGNORES LABOR'S COMMITMENT TO CONSULT THE BRITISH PEOPLE, AND UNTIL IT IS KNOWN HOW AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THAT QUESTION IS TO BE PUT TO THE ELECTORATE, THE POSSIBILITY OF BRITISH WITHDRAWAL  
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REMAINS VERY MUCH ALIVE.

7. AN EARLY LOOK AT EWUCTION RESULTS SUGGESTS THAT THE LIBERALS, AS EXPECTED, DID BETTER IN THE SOUTH THAN THE NORTH, THAT ENOCH POWELL'S ACTIONS MAY HAVE COST THE TORIES SOME IMPORTANT SEATS IN THE MIDLANDS AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, THAT THE REDISTRIBUTION OF CONSTITUENCIES--WHICH FAVORED THE TORIES--MAY HAVE COST LABOR A DECISIVE VICTORY.

8. AMONG THE MANY CASUALTIES OF YESTERDAY'S ELECTION MUST BE COUNTED DICK TAVERNE'S VISION OF A REALIGNMENT OF THE LEFT (LONDON'S 944). TAVERNE HIMSELF BARELY HELD ON TO HIS OWN SEAT IN LINCOLN, AND HIS SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES ELSEWHERE MADE NO IMPACT WHATSOEVER ON THE OUTCOME. FURTHERMORE, ALL THE LEFTISTS IN THE LABOR PARTY WHO HAD BEEN CONSIDERED VULNERABLE WERE IN FACT RE-ELECTED WITH INCREASED MAJORITIES. AS OF FRIDAY MORNING, THE ONLY THREE INCUMBENT LABOR MP'S TO LOSE THEIR SEATS WERE ALL MODERATE PRO-MARKETEERS.

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## Message Attributes

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**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 01 MAR 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**TAGS:** PINT, UK  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005